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stopbullying.gov

What Is Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

- Types of Bullying
- Where and When Bullying Happens
- Frequency of Bullying

Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying:

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments

  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm
- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping/pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone's things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures

Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. It can also happen travelling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the Internet.

Frequency of Bullying

There are two sources of federally collected data on youth bullying:

- The 2022 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice) indicates that, nationwide, about 19.2% of students ages 12-18 in grades 6-12 reported being bullied, with approximately 15.4% of students reporting being bullied with a power imbalance, 14.5% being bullied repeatedly, and 12.7% being bullied with both a power imbalance and repetition.
- The 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) indicates that, nationwide, 19% of students in grades 9–12

report being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.

See also "Frequency of Cyberbullying."

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- Yes
- No

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